

condemn, or they may commit great injustice. So far as we can learn, the Devon Asylum is found to fulfil all its purposes admirably well, and to entitle its architect to praise.

We must allow Mr. Fowler to continue his remarks:—

"With regard to the facility of inspection, and indeed all duties and proceedings requiring the passing through the several buildings, galleries, passages, &c., it is of great importance to consider the result of different forms and dispositions of plan; which naturally leads to a comparison in that respect of the radiating form, and the rectangular plans of some of the principal establishments previously erected. At Hanwell, which is the largest and of the E form, in passing from the centre to the extreme wings, it is necessary to go through the whole range of the interjacent buildings, being about 750 feet in length; and if occasion should render it necessary to go from one extremity to the other, the distance is more than doubled; but with the alternative of crossing the open area 400 feet wide, which at night or in bad weather, must be very objectionable. In a continuous inspection or passing through the entire range, the length of line to be passed over will be the same in every case, presuming there is no doubling, as it will simply consist of the aggregate length of the buildings; but on the approach to each separate portion, the distance is increased in each case by the addition of the intermediate portions to be passed through; which, besides the loss of time, involves many other serious objections, viz., the disturbance of the inmates, the increased time occupied in the transmission of food and other supplies, the interference with the duties of the attendants, and the discipline of the patients under their care &c.

The kitchen at Hanwell is more than 1,000 feet distant from the day-rooms in the west wing, and it is consequently found desirable to send the dinners packed into a cart drawn by a horse, to save the inconvenience that must otherwise be incurred by passing through the intermediate galleries, corridors, &c.

Now in the Devon Asylum, by the semi-circular arrangement, the dinners are separately delivered at the several day rooms by the shortest possible course, and therefore with the greatest degree of ease to the attendants and comfort to the patients; and the separate access to each wing obtained through the circular corridor, as the means of preventing any waste of time in the transit. This being a matter of continual occurrence, greatly affects the facility and efficient working and discipline of the establishment.

In the arrangement of the siring-grounds, it will be seen, that the plan in question has a great advantage over the rectangular form, as in the latter case the endeavour to concentrate leads in the adoption of barrow, oblique forms partly disconnected from the buildings, and consequently inconvenient for the patients in passing to and from.

The H form is preferable to the E, simply because the objection of passing through one part to reach another, is in this case considerably diminished. It must be obvious, that where the central range meets the two side ranges, you have two points of radiation, from which each of the contiguous parts may be separately approached; but with some sacrifice of the central or intersecting portion, which forms the common access. This has been judiciously managed in the plan of the Wakefield Asylum, and copied in that at Hanwell, by forming a nucleus of day rooms around a central staircase and corridor, but this arrangement is not compatible with economy either of space or construction."

Mr. Fowler's sensible observations will suggest to our younger readers what it is very desirable they should be fully impressed with, namely, the importance of a good plan and distribution. Whether in designing dwelling houses or public buildings—excepting those which are purely ornamental—the first thing to be attended to is to afford the conveniences and the accommodation required, in the best manner and without wasteful expenditure. In respect of this latter point, a good distribution makes a vast difference, and cannot be too

carefully studied. The elevation should follow the plan, not precede it; and in nine cases out of ten, moreover, this course will be found to lead to the composition of better elevations than the contrary, having more variety, purity, and character. Consider well the purposes of the building,—the wants to be supplied; provide for these in the best possible manner; then employ taste in the fitting adornment of the structure so produced, and in the expression of its purpose externally, and the result can scarcely fail to be satisfactory.

LEAVES FROM AN ARCHITECT'S DIARY. No. III.

It would not be amiss for those of us, who are devoted to the Gothic style exclusively, sometimes to call to recollection what has befallen other fashions of architecture. When St. Pancras Church was built, we were fully sensible of the merits of Grecian architecture. An architect of great ability,* but whose name is unknown to the present generation, visited the Athenian Acropolis, it is said, at the sole expense of his clients, expressly to glean the materials of his work, at what was then deemed the fountain of art. He made himself acquainted with every detail of the remarkable structure, which he had chosen as the foundation of his design, and he acquired the facility of designing Grecian ornament. He returned to England, and built a church, which people went to see, and which those who were able to judge, lauded as a work of art scarcely inferior to the examples from which it had been studied. It must be admitted, that some of this praise exceeded the merit of the work itself, and was not always referable to sound principles. We were copyists then in Grecian, just as we are now in Gothic; our object was to design something that might have been of the age of Pericles, as now it is to mimic the churches of the thirteenth century. To consider the purpose of the building, and then to carry out a design, which might express that purpose, was not the course of proceeding, nor is it now; the end sought was a mistaken one, and yet that end was not attained. Yet, with some of the faults here alluded to, St. Pancras Church has many parts of great beauty. It has a fine portico and three noble doorways, much enriched, and shewing admirable workmanship. All the ornaments about the building are beautiful, and have been drawn and designed with great skill. This is not confined to such as are copied from the Athenian building, but is even more remarkable in those which are original. Such ornaments are those of the clock, of the summit of the tower, and of the sarcophagi beneath the porticoes of Caryatides. They are entirely Greek in character, and therefore are quite distinct from Roman ornament, and still further removed from Gothic; they are not natural forms, but the forms of nature architecturalised in that manner which clearly marks the Grecian style. But, notwithstanding this, who would now-a-days in passing, care to turn his head to the window of an omnibus to look at St. Pancras church? A Cambridge freshman would most assiduously seek out every new church, and print an anonymous critique, in which every thing would be condemned that did not resemble the style of the thirteenth century, but not even an architect, save the writer hereof, and the half dozen of old Phil-hellenists would find anything to admire in St. Pancras Church.

We like to rack works of art by their real merits; we cannot understand why, after an edifice has been held up to fame as the finest of its class, it should, unless justly so, at once sink into insignificance. It does, indeed, broken "something rotten in the state" of architectural criticism, something of unstable foundation in our principles. The sooner we set about discovering what are real principles of criticism the better, or fashion after fashion will succeed each other for years to come, much as they have done for years past. Gothic architecture may be the best fitted for ecclesiastical purposes; we believe it is; but why should we shut our eyes to what is also beau-

tiful, though differently expressed? If we would advance the art, we must look for information from all sources, and the more varied the mode of expression in the work from which we learn, the greater will be the semblance of originality in our own. An architect need violate no principle of pointed architecture, and yet he may gain ideas from every style; he may infuse into a new building beauties which the architects of old did not dream of, but of which they would have availed themselves, had there been an age of investigation like ours. At no previous time have the multitude of styles been so well explained; every period in the history of architecture, every local peculiarity, finds its delineator; and of all these materials are we to make nothing whatever? Nothing so far have we done but copy them; every fresh discovery is the herald of a fresh fashion, and one day we may forget the architecture of the middle ages, and copy the rude shapes, and the monsters of Chiapas and Yucatan. Whatever style may become fixed in England, we should ascribe their proper value to others. Because we study every stone in York or Salisbury, we should not forget St. Paul's Cathedral, still needing careful delineation; we should be open to impressions of beauty where beauty is really to be found, practise what style we may. Therefore we confess to a pleasure in bringing to light any building, which has been allowed to fall under implied censure; we revel amongst old staircases, and bits of iron railing, just because no one else thinks of noticing them; and we have said so much about St. Pancras Church, not because we think it a very fine work of art, but because it has beauties, which escape the eyes of ecclesiastical societies and antiquarian associations.

—Perhaps we should offend the half dozen above mentioned, did we find fault with any important detail of Grecian architecture. Yet we risk their opposition, in asserting that the angular capital of the Ionic order is an artifice, unworthy of the style in which it was used. It seems to us nothing more than a bungling way of overcoming a difficulty, a difficulty which, although otherwise it might restrict the use of the order to the portico in *antæ*, it is essential should be overcome by some means which shall not be apparent to every one. In no style have so many artifices been resorted to, to overcome difficulties, optical and constructive, as in the Grecian. Most of these are remarkably ingenious, and accomplish the object, whilst the artifice itself is concealed. But not so in the case of the angular capital; the artifice and the difficulty which led to it are both apparent; they strike the eye even before it has taken notice of the beautiful forms of the other volutes. It is probable that this difficulty led to the disuse of the Ionic order amongst the Romans, and to the substitution of angular volutes in all capitals by the later Italians.

—Our architecture is strikingly inferior to that of any preceding period in certain minutiae. We sometimes labour to produce a beautiful design, and for want of attention to the position of the edifice, or to the arrangement of the steps or approaches, the front is wanting in dignity, and disappoints expectation. The cause of the failure is much more simple than many suppose. In comparing the plans of English buildings with those of Italy, we often omit to consider the steps, the arrangement of the paving, the posts which line the footway, the railings, and many other points which architects in England do not trouble themselves much about, but which are probably quite as important in the general effect as any other adjuncts of the design. In the Italian palaces all these points are most carefully treated; sometimes there is a broad pavement in front to give importance to the building; sometimes there are pedestals or posts surrounding it; sometimes the steps extend the whole width of the front; in other cases they are grouped and arranged with great skill at the entrance. In no case are the buildings surrounded by lofty railings, such as in England quite destroy the effect, however open they may be. For the eye begins its examination at the top of the railings, therefore one most important part of the design, the basement, or the effective treatment of which every thing else depends, might just as well be a plain surface. So that, in such buildings as have had rather careful consideration in the